

Meeting of Friday, March 17th, 1967.

M-1159 Group IV. With Music #1104-1105.

Harmonium music.

Now again two things that I would like to mention: you know Friday evenings are, to some extent, good evenings because certain things I can say perhaps in a simple way without running the risk of questions. And I can say then partly because of what I may have heard or have thought about during the week of something that is appropriate for us.

It's almost the last time because next week will be the last music for a little while. And during that period when I'm away, there will be music. Also I hope that we will be able to send some tapes from Seattle or even Berkeley, maybe some organ tapes you can play. Come here if you like. Lotus and Georgie open their house for you to come if you like. Also on Friday just sit and listen. Always keep in mind what is the purpose. Why do we do this? Why do we get together to see each other, and to listen to a little music? Why music? Of course it can touch you in some way. It has some particular kind of quality. And for that reason it may help you to be a little bit more alive.

And then if you can perhaps play some of the things - I mean by play, not music but that what we talked about at times, certain subjects that we discussed - it might refresh your memory. And then in that recollection you will see again this group, and perhaps what you felt; and perhaps then go home with a certain inspiration, being reminded, reminded of your life, reminded of the necessity of doing something, small as it may be, - not always easy and not always understood either. And at the same time this terrible desire

that ought to be in one to do something with their life as they possibly can do; and to make out of it something that is from their standpoint more worthwhile, even if it may not be worthwhile for someone else. And it may not be recognized. For yourself your conscience that you know you have, and that gradually should develop, with that you measure such attempts, - I say small attempts you make.

You see, what is this really? What are we doing? I'll tell you a little story that I thought of. Every once in a while I hope in Firefly that will be published, there will be little stories to break the monotony, to give you a little train of thought, a different kind of a direction, introducing some kind of an element that is a little unexpected, in order to help you to recall again and again a reason why you are reading it, why you perhaps are listening to it. And these stories, they are like in ordinary life, very simple.

Someone asked me, "What are you doing?" I said, "I, I don't know. What am I doing?" He said, "Well, I mean of course, what do you do in your daily life? What is your profession?"

"Oh, oh, oh," I said, "I run a restaurant."

"Restaurant? What for?"

"Well, people have to eat."

"Yes, that's right. But a restaurant! Isn't it monotonous?"

I said, "No, it is not monotonous. I am the cook."

"Oh, are you the cook? What do you cook?"

"Well, of course, meals," I said. "Of course, meals."

"Yes, but do you know enough about it?"

I said: "Well, I've learned a little bit here and there. I'm not a French cook, but I, - and I don't look as if I am a cook because I don't wear one of those hats. But nevertheless I am a cook. I got some information together; and I make some meals and some food that is palatable."

"But how?"

"Well," I said, "I got hold of some recipes, you know? Someone taught me. Of course always someone has to tell someone what is what. You cannot always get it out of their home, and say, 'this man, he was very good. His name was Gurdjieff. He had recipes for food.' "

"Oh, so you're preparing that?"

"Preparing meals? Yes, yes, I do it. I cook a little bit. And I use the recipes; and I mix this and that and that kind of an ingredient. And that perhaps of course it cannot avoid that maybe sometimes it has the flavor of the cook, that is something that the cook does. But the substance is always according to the recipe of Mr. Gurdjieff."

"Was he such a good man?"

"Yes, he knew how to cook. He knew how to prepare meals. That is why he has said so, because he said he had an 'idea table'. And that gave me an idea to have a table with ideas. But I call it food, of course, because people come. They ask, 'Have you anything to eat?' And I say, 'Yes, yes, I have lots of things. What would you like? Something special for this or that? What is it that you really think that you need?' And then they sit down, and I try to prepare some kind of - maybe soup, easily digestible. Or maybe some proteins, or maybe some salad. Maybe something that is palatable also to look at,

that people like, or that has a good taste, in any event. Someone who wants certain things, knowing sometimes what they want - and sometimes all they know is that they are hungry for something. They don't know exactly what they should eat. And then maybe I recommend something. Because then I say, 'Maybe you try this. Maybe you try that.' "

"It's interesting," he says, "because you know I have a very nice table. It is square. It has a tablecloth, damask linen. Not much of an ornament on it. It's very simple. The plates are also not so much decorated, so there is no attention directed to the plates, or the furniture even. The whole thing is concentrated on the kind of food that one eats. And of course I'm very particular about it that it is kept that way. It should be kept that way, because otherwise it may get spoiled. And we don't want anything spoiled, not even the tablecloth.

"And that is why," I said, "this is interesting, because the other day when I was cleaning up after, there were a couple of people who sat; and there they got into a little bit of an argument. They had been eating quite a bit, apparently quite a bit. I don't know how much they actually digested. But then they were talking. And all of a sudden someone gets a little pencil out. There they start - sitting next to each other - start to draw on my beautiful tablecloth.

"I said, 'But why, why should they spoil that? They have been eating. Why don't they go somewhere else?' But of course, you see, I'm a good cook. I have to leave people alone. I cannot always interfere with them. They have to do what they think is right. So of

course I was curious. So after they left, - they didn't leave a tip, strange enough. They were probably so busy, maybe they forgot. But when I saw what they had drawn, it was the Enneagram."

I said, "It surprised me. Why should food give rise to drawing on a tablecloth, and to try to explain to each other what is an Enneagram? I didn't care about the tablecloth. I took it. I cut it up. That is, I cut out this piece. I didn't care how much it cost. Because I thought that this kind of result of the food that they ate, and their discussion among themselves was worthwhile. And I kept it. At first I didn't want to show it. It was a little precious. But now I have framed it. It's in a little - it's hanging up there on the wall where everybody can see it. And I consider it the first time that that what is my food had some result. And I will never forget it for that reason. I've had it there for everyone to see; and every once in a while I stand in front of it and I try to remember how it all came about.

"There are crumbs of the idea table. One has to be very careful. Crumbs that are blown up, and all kinds of little systems - people do not know any more what really the reason for the crumbs was. That it just happens to be there, they think that the crumbs existed by themselves. Of course it must have come from somewhere, crumbs of something. But they take it as if it is their own. They are really not very honest. And as much as possible I warn people not to spill anything, and to go and ^{to} leave, if they can, the tablecloth exactly the same as they found it; and only to eat the food."

You see, we're eating. There is something that ought to be eaten because it has been prepared. And it has been prepared in

order to keep the recipes of Gurdjieff alive. And the responsibility of all of us is to eat in order to extract from the recipes and the food and the preparation/sustenance, sustenance for one's inner life. Because this table is only for inner life, to be fed by means of that what at times may seem to be a little indigestible. And at the same time if one accustoms oneself to eat a variety of food, and not to be afraid, and to keep on eating even if sometimes one feels a little satisfied, to keep on eating; finally certain things will start in one's inner life which belong to a possible development of it. And when that is there and you know where to go, then after some time you will be able to live without a cook.

I drink for that time.